



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 3, 2010

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

**SB 345 "An Act Authorizing Municipalities to Conduct a Pilot Program for the Use of
Automated Traffic Control Signal Enforcement Devices at Certain Intersections"**

Among other things, SB 345 would provide towns and cities the option of using "automated traffic control signal enforcement device[s]" (i.e. cameras) at local intersections for the purposes of enforcing red light violations. This proposal would give municipalities the option of utilizing this technology for a two-year pilot program, at a maximum of twelve local intersections each, and in accordance with plans reviewed by the Department of Public Safety. SB 345 would also establish certain due process procedures for municipalities that choose to implement such a program – and would only allow the recording of images of the license plates of those vehicles in violation – and *would not record* photographs of drivers, passengers, pedestrians, bikers, or landscapes.

CCM supports SB 345 as a reasonable proposal that would make local streets safer – and provide a much-needed benchmark for critics and proponents alike on the public safety value this technology can offer our communities.

SB 345 would be consistent with current law enforcement practices in various other states. According to a recent OLR report, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) cited that "more than 400 communities in about two dozen states use red light cameras."¹ Such major U.S. cities that are already taking advantage of this safety technology include New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, Denver, and Providence.

Photographic enforcement has been proven an effective tool in reducing intersection accidents in many U.S. locations. "An IIHS evaluation of a red light camera program in Oxnard, California, published in 1999, found that camera enforcement reduced the red light violation rate by about 42%. Increases in compliance were not restricted to the camera sites, but occurred at other intersections as well. Another Oxnard study, published in 2002, showed a significant citywide reduction in intersection crashes, with crashes reduced by 7% and crashes where an injury occurred reduced by 29%; right-angle crashes were reduced by 32%, while right-angle crashes involving injuries were reduced by 68%."²

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¹ "Red Light and Speed Cameras" OLR Report, 2010-R-0073; Paul Frisman 2/17/10.

² Ibid.

Despite criticism that such cameras could increase rear-end crashes – many experts have concluded that injuries caused by right-angle crashes tend to be more severe than those caused by rear-end crashes. Simply put, if someone slams on their brakes to avoid running a red light, and as a result, gets rear-ended – then they have more than likely also avoided a more serious accident of getting “t-boned” in a right-angle crash. Either way, they were not abiding by the traffic signals – yellow means slow, red means stop. SB 345 seeks to restore the practice of this often forgotten, yet still important, law.

Whether it is laptop computers in police cruisers or “shot-spotter” devices that detect gunfire in neighbors -- Connecticut’s law enforcement officials have a history of embracing technology in order to improve our quality of life, without unnecessary infringements on civil liberties. SB 345 would be a logical extension in an ongoing effort to improve public safety.

Current law in Connecticut should be amended to offer hometowns the option to decide for themselves whether their communities could benefit from the use of cameras at red light intersections.

CCM urges the Committee to **favorably report SB 345**.

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If you have any questions, contact Bob Labanara of CCM at (203) 498-3000 or rlabanara@ccm-ct.org.